

# The Advocate

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## HUMPHREY'S HUMBUG.

Another Campaign Sensation Coming From the Land of Vidette and Dynamite Fame—Another Premature Explosion.

On August 30, the *Kansas City Journal* published five columns of dime novel rot purporting to be a history of the Frazer-Gibson murders in Chautauqua and Elk counties, and the incidents leading to the arrest of Frank Kinzey and Jerry Hutton, which occurred August 29 at Sedan. The article was illustrated to show the blood-curdling manner in which the murders were committed, but a faithful perusal of the story fails to show the reader what the illustrations were drawn from, unless it was the reporter's imagination.

This fake brought a broad grin to the faces of many of the newspaper fraternity, who saw that the sensation that had been set up to sell to newspapers had now been turned to political uses. The fraud is best exposed by the following report in the *Kansas City Times* of August 31:

"The arrest at Sedan yesterday of Frank Kinzey and Jerry Hutton, charged with the murder of John S. Frazer two years ago, has every appearance of being a frantic attempt by Gov. Humphrey and other republican office-seekers to create feeling against the farmers' alliance, and make capital for the republicans in the present campaign. The news of the arrest was carefully guarded from the newspapers, with a single exception of a *Kansas City* republican organ, which this morning printed the story of the murder, unfolding the details of the great conspiracy within the farmers' alliance, and imputing to that organization the full responsibility for the awful tragedy. This is given on the authority of an amateur detective, John T. T. Davis, who is credited with having unravelled the mystery.

"The story as printed in the *Kansas City Journal* this morning appeared almost verbatim in the *New York Press* several months ago, except that instead of Kinzey and Hutton being the names of the accused men fictitious names were used.

Last November Detective Davis came to Topeka and informed Gov. Humphrey that he had, after a sleuth-like chase, found the trail of the murderers of Frazer, and had unearthed a vile conspiracy on the part of the farmers' alliance. The governor became greatly interested in the story, and promised Davis every assistance in his work. The detective returned to Sedan to continue his investigation, but before doing so thought he saw an opportunity to turn an honest penny by selling his information to a newspaper. He first went to the *Topeka Capital*, and outlining his story

offered it to that paper exclusively, to be used only after the first arrest was made. The *Capital* did not want it, so Davis went to Kansas City and entered into negotiations with the *Journal*. That paper paid him his price, and Davis unfolded his tale, which was at once written up and put in type to be ready for use at a moment's notice. "Dummy" names were inserted in the article to be replaced by the real names of the alleged murderers as soon as they should be arrested.

"Davis then proceeded on his way to Chautauqua, and again took up his clue. For some reason the mystery did not unravel as rapidly as he had hoped, and he was unable to secure enough evidence to warrant an arrest.

"In the *Journal* office is a young man who corresponds for a number of eastern papers. He saw an opportunity to profit by Davis' story, so he had a number of copies of the proof-sheets printed and mailed to several newspapers, among others the *New York Press*, instructing each to hold it until the arrests were made. The *Press* overlooked the instructions, and published the story, dummy names and all, last December, thereby scoring a "scoop" on the *Journal*.

"Gov. Humphrey is not in the city today, but his private secretary, James Smith, said that the executive officer had dropped the matter some time ago, and knew nothing of the work done by Davis for several months. Early in the investigation the governor employed Senator S. S. Kirkpatrick to represent the state in the matter, and sent Lewis Hanback to Chautauqua county to unravel the mystery. Nothing came of this. In the meantime the republican papers in the Third district were charging the crime to the Chautauqua county alliance, and much political capital was made out of it. People's party papers likened these accusations to those made by the republicans in regard to the dynamite explosion at Coffeyville in 1888. The Chautauqua county alliance employed Jeff Hudson, of Fredonia, now the democratic and People's party nominee for congress in the Third district, to investigate the charges and disprove any connection of the alliance with the crime.

"It is reported here this afternoon on good authority that warrants will be sworn out for the arrest of every man who was a member of the Center township alliance at the time the murders were committed, charging them with complicity in the crime.

"It will be impossible to keep the affair out of politics, and it bids fair to be as important a factor in this campaign as was the Coffeyville explosion in the campaign of 1888."

## A CHAUTAUQUA MAN'S STATEMENT.

To the Editor of THE ADVOCATE.

The sensational article published in the *Kansas City Journal* of August 31, 1892, in regard to the murder of John S. Frazer, which occurred in this county in June, 1890, is one of the most malicious, lying and scandalous libels upon a whole community that was ever conceived or published. In fact, there is just sufficient truth in the whole matter to make the lies all the more prominent. What

is the truth? That John S. Frazer was most foully murdered we all believe. Who did the act? We don't know. Frank Kinzey and Jerry Hutton have been arrested, charged with the crime.

When it became known that Messrs. Gibson and Frazer were intending to ship a large number of Texas cattle into this county, they were waited upon by a committee composed of leading farmers in this county, and a conference had, in which the dangers to domestic cattle were discussed, and Gibson and Frazer notified that they were exposing their neighbors and friends to serious and irreparable loss in order to advance their own private interests. Gibson and Frazer answered all argument first by declaring their belief in no danger, and second by offering to pay all losses that might occur from Texas fever. There the conference ended without "ill" feeling, as the *Journal* states, and one of the parties to this conference afterwards leased to Mr. Gibson a large pasture.

The *Journal* is "off" again when it says this conference took place after the cattle were landed. The conference was had quite a while before the cattle ever reached the state of Kansas.

The *Journal* is "off" again when it says the cattle were landed at Sedan. The cattle were landed in the Indian Territory, south of Coffeyville, and driven across the line into the state west of Coffeyville and thirty miles east of Sedan, February 28, 1890. Wire fences were cut soon after the cattle were driven into Chautauqua county, not only around the Gibson & Frazer pastures, but around other pastures with which Gibson & Frazer had nothing to do, and which did not and never have had a hoof of Texas cattle in them.

The *Journal* willfully lies when it produces what it pretends to be a note from one committee to another, as no such committees ever existed and the officers have no such information, I know.

The *Journal* again willfully lies when it speaks about members of the alliance forming inner circles and meeting at a house near a certain cross-roads, the owner of which house has since gone crazy. No such thing has ever occurred in this county. The thing is a lie out of whole cloth.

The *Journal* again lies when it says that S. S. Kirkpatrick has been hired by Governor Humphrey to take charge of and prosecute the case. The facts are that Humphrey and all the rest of the clan like him, with the *Journal*, when this murder was committed rushed into open declaration charging the crime and laying it at the door of the alliance, and seemed to be perfectly satisfied to let it remain there undisturbed, as none of them ever did anything to bring the criminals to justice until Davis and West (the detectives to whom the *Journal* ascribes so much honor), through the *Freeman's Lance*, a People's party paper at Sedan, charged "that the criminals were known to the officers and that they were permitted to go free in order that the republican papers and orators might charge this crime to the People's party, (as they did), and thereby gain;" then it was that Humphrey showed some interest in this matter, and then it was that the *Journal* also showed some interest in the matter, and some of its managers wrote some letters (which I can make oath to if Mr. *Journal* thinks I know not whereof I speak), and the only action that Humphrey then took was to insist on the county attorney commencing prose-

cution; and when it became known upon whom suspicion most strongly rested, then these same gentlemen who were so very content to charge this crime to the alliance and let it rest at that—these same men, I say, magnanimously publicly declared that they did not believe that any political party or organization had anything to do with the crime. Why had they so radically changed their minds? Was it another Coffeyville bomb? It was because the coroner who conducted the investigation or post mortem on Mr. Gibson's body and who took charge of the stomach, and who never allowed anyone but himself to analyze said stomach or the contents thereof, and who never made the results of his analysis known, if he made any, was a republican. It was because every man who is under suspicion for the murder of John S. Frazer and every man to whom the evidence points were republicans, and were never at any time members of the alliance.

Mr. W. H. Gibson and his daughter Mahala, were on their way home and stopped in Moline to stay over night. Gibson retired apparently as well as usual, and was found dead the next morning. No cause was ever assigned, and the coroner's post mortem developed no information and was practically suppressed, as I have before stated. Gibson was on his way home, and not going away, as the *Journal* says.

John S. Frazer was most foully murdered, as it is supposed, about two miles and a half northwest of Sedan, on June 28, 1890, and his body was found on Monday following in a pool of water in Deer creek; the pool was about waist deep and about fifteen feet across. There were six stabs in his chest, one of which penetrated to his heart; his throat was cut from ear to ear, his windpipe being severed; there was one stab also in his abdomen. Gibson and Frazer were good men and valuable citizens. Mr. Gibson's death is a mystery. Frazer was murdered, and this community and this county deeply regret it, and we are doing everything in our power to ferret out the criminals and punish them. But the citizens here, without regard to party, color, or previous conditions of servitude, protest against such outrageous lies and libels upon a whole community as that contained in the *Journal*.

In conclusion, let me say that the alliance and People's party are entirely out of the question in connection with this matter, and that some of the leaders have been most prominent in bringing about this prosecution, and have employed eminent counsel to assist the prosecution. I charge the *Journal* with not only willfully and maliciously lying about this matter, but with suppressing the fact that the alliance has been and is assisting in this prosecution. I charge it with also having its libels, falsehoods and misrepresentations ready for print more than three months ago, and was induced to withhold the publication thereof only upon the promise that it would be first notified when the arrests were made. And there can be but two reasons why it published the stuff that it did: First, to make the paper extremely sensational in order to make it sell; and second, in the hopes of injuring the People's party in Kansas where it hoped the truth might not become known. In each case the motive was most contemptible and shows a spirit of avarice or hatred blacker than the shades of hades. DAN M. FIFE.  
Sedan, Kas., Sept. 2, 1892.